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What Time Is It?

BY ALBERT G. BUTZER

Everything has its appointed hour, there is a time for all things under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1.

IT is a great event in the life of a growing child when he learns to use a watch or clock, and is able to tell the time of day even to the exact minute. But it is an infinitely greater achievement in the life of a mature person when he has come to understand the deeper significance of this commonplace question, What time is it? Indeed, one of the most difficult and the most important lessons of life is to know what time it is.

So the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes begins his third chapter in this way: "Everything has its appointed hour, there is a time for all things under heaven." (Moffatt). Then he goes on to specify. There is a time, he says, for birth and a time for death; a time to plant and a time to uproot; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build; a time to cry and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to scatter and a time to gather; a time to embrace and a time to refrain; a time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to throw away; a time to tear and a time to sew; a time for silence and a time for speech; a time for love and a time for hate; a time for war and a time for peace.

Now, admittedly, the Book of Ecclesiastes does not represent the highest level of inspiration, or morality, or spirituality in the Bible—although Thomas Wolfe thought so, as indicated in his novel *You Can't Go Home Again*. And yet didn't this ancient writer plainly get hold of something as revealed in these words of his, something which embraces a fundamental truth about life and religion? For life isn't all one thing all the time, and it isn't all another thing all the time. And religion—real religion—which is always intimately related to life, isn't all one thing all the time, or all another thing all the time. Sometimes reli-

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gion—true religion, intelligent religion—means one thing, and sometimes it means another thing, often a radically different thing. And the fine point of life, as well as the fine point of religion, is to know when to do one thing, and when to do another thing, perhaps quite the opposite. And that exceedingly fine point in life and religion is set in the dead center of this question, What time is it? For today, as in the past, everything has its appointed hour; there is a time for all things under heaven.

To begin with, those of us who are fathers and mothers, or schoolteachers, or even maiden aunts or bachelor uncles, know right well how true all this is when we are dealing with children. To be always sweet and soft and gentle and patient and long-suffering with a child is just about the worst kind of child psychology. Such a one-sided, over-indulgent treatment invariably results in the proverbial spoiled child who grows up to be miserable with himself, and an intolerable pest to those around him. So one small boy is reported to have said to his doting mother: "Don't call me Lamb all the time—call me Tiger!" And another youngster in one of these ultra-progressive nursery schools surprised his dear teacher by asking one morning, "Must we always do what we like to do?" Those children, you see, were wiser than their elders.

MISGUIDED SYMPATHY

On the other hand, for a father always to act toward his child like a top-sergeant in the army, and to give orders in the form of military commands—with the understanding "theirs not to reason why—there's but to do or die"—well, obviously that sort of treatment is just as unwise and fraught with serious danger for the future development of that child.

But there is a time to be gentle with a child, and there's a time to be firm. There's a time to permit the child to play, and a time to make him work. There's a time to grant his requests and a time to refuse his requests; time to be patient with him, and a time to be patient no longer. And the fine art of dealing intelligently and effectively with children revolves around this question, What time is it? Indeed, some of us as we look back over our own childhood are ever so grateful to fathers and mothers who, though they knew nothing of modern psychology, nevertheless by an uncanny intuition knew what time it was. Though they know nothing about golf, nevertheless they were terribly accurate in timing some of their shots. Everything has its appointed hour. There is a time for all things under heaven.

Then too, as we deal with grown-up men and women in the daily round, can't we see the vital importance of this question, What time is it? Take this matter of helping those who apparently are in need of help, a moot matter which has been constantly before us in these last long lean years. Unquestionably it is a clear teaching of our religion that we should give to those who are in need—give food and clothing and shelter so that none of our fellow men and their little children shall lack these bare necessities of life. And yet aren't some people so constituted that they are perfectly cor tent to have someone else look after them and provid for them? Don't you have some relatives who are lik that? And as long as they know that someone else wi help them they will never put forth a determined effor to help themselves. And by continuing to help suc people as these, don't we as a matter of fact hur them—hurt something vital and valuable within them selves?

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

So we do need to ask in all our private social serv ice and public relief, What time is it? Is it time t help and to continue to help? Or is it time to call halt on helping and compel certain people to hel themselves? And to compel a man to help himself, an to develop himself, may be a far finer form of socia service, a much more definitely religious act in th sight of God, and in the name of Christ, than to go o giving him mere material things.

Nor is it otherwise with some of these painful per sonal problems which bother many of us. Too fre quently we are inclined to feel sorry for ourselves, an to feel sorry for others, when in the grip of physica handicaps and personality difficulties or when face with a bitter disappointment or a crushing sorrow. Bu isn't there such a thing as feeling too sorry for our selves, and too sorry for others? Of course there's time for sympathy. But there's also a time whe sympathy, especially a soft coddling sympathy, must i the very light of religion give way to an intelligen severity—severity with others and most of all severit with ourselves. And there again you see the strategi importance of this question, What time is it? Every thing has its appointed hour. There is a time for al things under heaven.

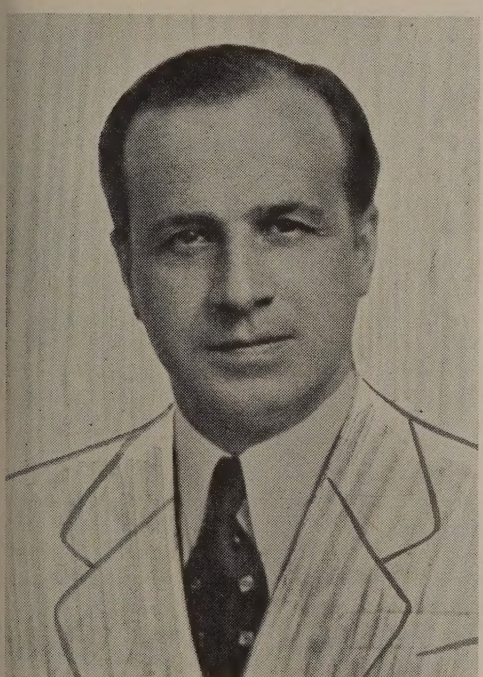
IN THE REALM OF WORLD AFFAIRS

Perhaps we have now dealt sufficiently with th more personal implications of this question, What tim is it? We are ready to consider some of its larger as pects, especially at such a time as this in world affairs We are all agreed, I am sure, that love is the suprem virtue as revealed in our holy religion. But what d we mean by love? To be kindly affectioned one towar another; to have good will in our hearts toward al men so that we sincerely will them good; to forgiv those who have wronged us until seventy times seven and to return good for evil, and to love our enemie as well as our friends? Yes, that's what it means t love in the light of our Christian faith.

But does that mean that we are to tolerate anythin in the lives of those around us, and in the affairs o men and of nations, no matter how awful, how inde cent, how unjust, how inhuman, how unspeakabl cruel? How can we accept such a cheap, soft, senti mental interpretation of love? Indeed, how can w really love some things without hating other things Who was it said, "Woe unto you, scribes, pharisees hypocrites, you white sepulchers, you serpents, you off spring of vipers, how shall you escape the damnatio of hell?" Who was it, whose soul quivered with right

ous wrath in the face of man's inhumanity to man? Wasn't it the Lord of love?

You see his love was not blind—blind to distinctions between right and wrong, or blind to moral responsibilities and obligations, blind to moral outrages which were going on around him. And if we are ever to mobilize a powerful moral force in this country and throughout the world, a moral force which merits the dynamic support of the moral order of the universe, and which will cast down wickedness enthroned in high places, then like the Lord of love we too must abhor that which is evil—because we love that which



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good. And it seems to me that our very desire to stay out of this war in Europe makes this problem all the more pointed to every one of us as American Christians. Everything has its appointed hour. There is a time for all things under heaven. What time is it?

ONLY THE CHRISTIAN FAITH CAN SAVE

Yes, and we had better come to grips with the solemn and urgent implications of this question with particular reference to religion. In 1938—mark the date—in 1938 Mr. J. Middleton Murry, the noted English writer, published a book under the title *Heroes of Thought*. It carried a foreword to the American reader which began with these words: "*You* have a margin still; ours is gone. You have time to think; we have not. You have a breathing space in which to become conscious of the unconscious faith on which the values you instinctively cherish and represent to the world really depend. And that faith," Mr. Murry bluntly declared, "is the Christian faith."

Then a few months ago Mr. Archibald MacLeish, director of the Congressional Library, addressing the annual convention of the American Librarians' Association, said: "The issue before us is at bottom a moral and a spiritual issue, and the moral and spiritual unpreparedness of the country is worse than its unpreparedness in arms." And he went on to warn us that without that moral and spiritual preparedness we might just as well leave our airplanes unbuilt and our battleships on paper.

Here too is Maxwell Anderson, one of our distinguished American playwrights, who in the preface to his latest play, *Journey to Jerusalem,* writes: "Christianity is still the strongest influence among us, toward that individual dignity upon which individual freedom is established."

These men know what time it is in America right now. Do we? Perhaps there was a time in the good old days when as individuals we could be complacent about our democracy, and not too concerned about our Christianity. But now—can't you see that the hands of the clock are pointing to just about five minutes before midnight? And will you go on being indifferent to religion, and indifferent to the church, and careless toward Christ—until it's too late!

'IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK'

When I was in college, Frank Cavenaugh was a famous football coach at Dartmouth. And during the First World War he was a major at the front in France, not far from the location of my battalion. He was subsequently badly wounded, and after enduring weeks of suffering in the hospital and an awful amount of plastic surgery, he was sent to the quiet and peace of an old Italian village to convalesce. As he steadily regained his strength, Cavenaugh strolled one day into the grounds of a medieval monastery and went into the old chapel to pray. Then while walking through the gardens in a far corner, where it seemed utterly abandoned and forgotten, he came across an ancient sundial, its face covered with the mold and moss of possibly centuries, but with a few letters of some inscription protruding through the encrusted accumulation.

So Cavenaugh with the aid of a sharp stick dug the entire inscription clear. It was in Latin, and with the help of the monastery priest this was the translation he worked out of that inscription: "Brother, it is later than you think!"

O God, who didst send Thy Son to be for us the way, the truth and the light, help us so to look to him, and so to live with him, and so to love him, that we shall always know the right time and never be too late—through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

TRUE PATRIOTISM is not disclosed in stirred emotions that can only be aroused by marching troops and the flashing splendor of mighty fleets. Real, lasting patriotism is made of stronger and better stuff. It is in the devotion of a people to those great, unchanging spiritual ideals that lend to them courage, zeal and strength to carry on in the face of every disaster.

JAMES E. FREEMAN.

'Thy Kingdom Come!'

By Frederick C. Grant

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10.

OUR WORLD is crying out for a concrete, practicable plan which will save us from the social chaos that now threatens the whole human race. Naturally, that cry challenges the church. The church has saved society more than once before, notably during the barbarian invasions that accompanied the downfall of the ancient classical culture in southern Europe. But can the church do so again, and now on a world scale? For not only Europe, this time, but the whole world is endangered by the threat of returning chaos. What has the church to offer in the crisis that is upon us?

It was in answer to this challenge, and in the strong conviction that the church must put its own house in order before undertaking the larger task, that a group of English churchmen met at Malvern College in Worcestershire, England, early in January. Their four days' conference resulted, not in a set of "findings" and "recommendations," but in one strong, decisive, articulate "Conference Resolution."

Their Resolution contains thirteen statements, followed by thirteen points which these leaders urge their fellow churchmen, and their whole nation, and men generally, to consider. Let me point you to certain great principles which ought to govern our consideration of these and of all other proposals for the achievement of a better life for man upon this earth. Let me follow the example of the Malvern Conference and set them forth as propositions:

I

First, the object of the church is still that of our Lord, the object for which he lived and died: it is the proclamation of God's Kingdom, God's Reign; the preparation for, the manifestation and establishment of God's perfect Reign over his world. True, Jesus did not define the term, "the Kingdom of God," theologically or otherwise; he took it for granted, he let men find in their own experience of God its full content and implications; for the fundamental idea of the Reign of God was quite clear from God's revelation in the Old Testament, which he presupposed.

As nearly as Jesus ever came to a definition was, quite characteristically, in the prayer he taught his disciples: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is not a formula of theology, but a prayer—that is significant. His gospel was the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Not even his revelation of himself was central, as we must recognize from the earliest records, but his proclamation of the immediacy and sovereignty of the Reign of God—this was always paramount.

Dr. Grant delivered this address at a meeting of American Episcopalians held in New Haven in January to consider the Manifesto issued by the Malvern Conference.

If the church is to be true to the teaching of ou Lord, the center of its teaching and theology mu still be the Kingdom of God. And, as the bishops Lambeth reminded us ten years ago, the doctrine God should receive far more emphasis in our preac ing.

II

Second, the Reign of God is to include the whc world and the whole of human life. It is to be a supe natural Reign, centered in and issuing from a supe natural realm; but it is to include the whole world, a is by no means limited to some "other-worldly" rei or realm, as the phrase goes. God is to "take his gre power and reign" over the nations and over the liv of all men, public and private. No human conce or interest or need lies outside the range of the divi purpose. God is "the God of all the earth," who "dc justly." Not a sparrow falls to the ground witho his care; not a child is injured, or crushed by povert anywhere, but God knows it and is concerned over And he is the God of nations as well—

> He weigheth the dust of the earth in a balance,
> And taketh up the isles as a very small thing.

Heaven is his throne, earth is his footstool. Not on the life of the world to come, but the life of men he and now is dependent upon God, amenable to Go and all men must stand, sooner or later, before l judgment seat: "before him shall be gathered all t nations."

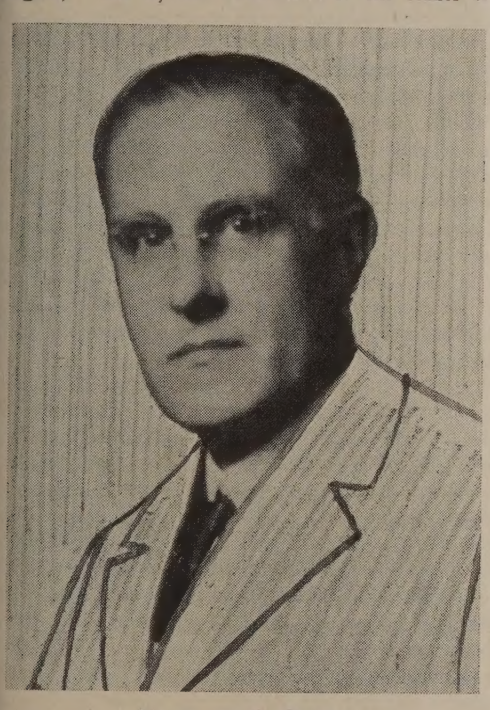
Hence when we say "the Kingdom of God" we a not talking about "heaven"—neither was our Lord: was talking, and we should talk, about the Reign God in this present world, here and now as well hereafter: "Thy will be done—*on earth*—as it is heaven."

Let me add a word as a professor of theology. Th is the conviction that is growing among scholars toda Jesus' teaching must be understood in the light of t Old Testament and of the Jewish religion of his day not merely of the apocalypses, but of the whole Judaism and of its universally recognized sacred boc For all its supernatural qualities and accompanimen miracles, resurrection, the judgment, angels, and t bliss of unending life, the hope of the Kingdom of G was thoroughly and essentially *social.* It was the ho of men oppressed and all but despairing in a war-tor economically maladjusted world not very unlike o own. But it was at the same time a *religious* hop For ancient thought, "social" ideals and "religiou were not separated; they overlapped, and were involv in close mutual relation. In the sound ancient sense as we see from the Old Testament, for example, a from the New as well—religion involved and carri with it a genuinely "social" outlook and applicatio Our Lord and his apostles carried this principle the way through: "You must love God, and you mu love your neighbor as yourself." And how can y love God *unless* you love your neighbor?

This then is the one thing needful for the churc This is the central conviction that gives urgency to message. The Reign of God is something vastly great

than the church—or the churches. The church's aim cannot be self-preservation, but must be the Reign of God. To save its life the church must lose its life, if called upon to do so for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Not even the salvation of individual men and women is an adequate goal of the church's effort—except as individuals are to be saved in the Kingdom of God, both here and hereafter.

The "social implications" of the gospel are clear on every page of the New Testament. Take a passage where you least expect it: in Mark 7, where our Lord is saying that "out of the hearts of men proceed evil thoughts," that is, the inclination to sin comes from



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within the individual himself. Then follows a list of vices, and they reach their climax in sins that are grossly anti-social. Look them up in a good commentary or in an up-to-date Greek lexicon. Lying, trickery, taking unfair advantage of others, arrogance, recklessness—these are placed frankly on a par with murder, adultery and stealing. The passage may be "secondary," as some scholars hold; but it certainly tells us what it meant to the early Christians actually to live by Jesus' teaching.

It is clear also when we pass from the New Testament to other early Christian writings—for example, the Apologists. Even the pagan testimony bears witness to it; note Pliny's famous letter to Trajan. The Christians of Bithynia have bound themselves by a solemn oath "not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up" (*Ep.* x. 96). The social bearing of the gospel is obvious from the start.

III

Third, God's Reign is certainly not something to be established by men, say by a majority vote. It is from of old, even from everlasting. But it must *come.* A rebellious province must be incorporated once more within the empire; sin and every kind of evil must be blotted out, so that God's will may be done perfectly, here as in heaven. And it will be set up by God himself; not by men, but by God acting through men. This is the very principle of the Incarnation—God can and does take human flesh, human wills and human minds and use them for his purposes.

Hence the church's work must be largely "secular," as Canon Barry has said: secular work done with a sacred motive.

> Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine.

Therefore let Christians enter politics and business—as urged in Article 5 of the Malvern Resolution. The weakness of democracy and the weakness of the church (I do not identify them, even in aim!)—these weaknesses result from our failure to carry over our religious principles into the life we live every day, in the world which is really our world, which we help to make and which in turn makes or unmakes us. Why should politics be "rotten," and business be honeycombed with tricks and artifices designed to enable one group to take advantage of another? There lies our task! If democracy fails in our world it will fail from lack of inner discipline, from lack of devotion to its fundamental principles, on the part of the very ones who really stand to lose most by its decay.

IV

But the church is above all parties and even all nations. Its program is neither communism nor fascism, neither democracy (taken as a political principle) nor absolutism. It cannot tolerate hatred, either of classes or of individuals. The church's idea of society is that of a universal *family,* the "family of God." The Kingdom of God must embrace all men, since God created all, cares for all. Nor does it matter much whether the church is thought to be radical or conservative. One of my students told me of a gentleman who read the Malvern Resolution and broke out: "Good heavens! Malvern is more radical than the New Deal! We aren't going to be safe from radicalism even in the church."

But we are not trying—nor were the Malvern churchmen—to be radical, or clever, or to say smart, uncomfortable things; rather, our purpose is, first, to find the causes underlying not only the war but also underlying the whole lack of balance in our modern life; and, second, to find their cure. Life on this earth *might* be, *can* be, vastly more decent and more satisfying than it is, for every child of man. And the only solution, according to the church, is the old one: "Seek ye first God's Kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." That does not mean: Forget your earthly cares, and trust in God,

and you will have a consolation prize in the world to come. That means, instead: Put God first, and make his will dominant in all human relationships; seek his Kingdom and obey the demands of his *justice,* and the needs of men will be met.

We are not considering war aims, or even peace aims (in the limited, political sense of that term). We are considering a whole way of life which shall be more in accordance with the will of God, and will bring about the divine justice—"righteousness"—in every sphere of human life. It affects not only politics but also economics, not only war but peace, not only business but education—in fact the whole life of man. As the church conceives religion to be its task ("let the Church be the Church!"), so it conceives religion to involve all of life. Health, education, the spiritual life of the individual, trade and manufacture, moral sanity in public and in private, worship, the sacraments, unemployment, disarmament, news, the arts, birth and death and the life to come—all are concerns of the church.

If the Roman poet could write, "I am a man, and nothing human is alien to me," then the church can equally say, "I am the *church,* and nothing human is alien to me."

We cannot possibly accept the situation brought about by the modern pagan, secular revolt from religion, which would keep whatever good things in our society are derived from the Christianity of the past but resents the church's "intrusion" into areas outside the specifically and narrowly "religious" domain. Christianity is really a *way of life,* if the distinction must be drawn, and not a religion. But of course a religion is more than hearing sermons and saying prayers: religion is of necessity a way of life, not only for a few individuals but for all mankind. Without a shadow of doubt, that is the way the Christian religion has always thought of itself.

V

At the same time, and for this very reason, we cannot hate, we cannot be partisan, we will not let the church's voice be identified with any class or group. In its very essence the church is catholic, universal, and is committed to seek only the will of God, who is the Creator of all men and the loving Father of every child of man.

If there are horror-spots in our civilization, we will not flinch nor hide them from our eyes. This is God's world, and they must go. If individuals stand in the way, through attachment to private or group profit from such injustices, we will deal as fairly as we can with such individuals—there can be no "liquidation" in any Christian program, even of the ruthless exploiters of their fellows; nor anything that encourages brutality and revenge. But we will teach and persuade, and if necessary argue; we will urge other men to subscribe to these principles, the principles of the gospel; we will stand ready to sacrifice ourselves and our own advantage, and the emoluments and privileges of the church if necessary, in order to advance the church's own cause; and we say this, not because we are members of some party, or advocates of some social theory or program, but simply because we are Christians and stand committed to Jesus' spirit, Jesus' gospel, Jesus' way of life.

If we say harsh words about irresponsible privilege, or the spirit-crushing effects of poverty, or about unjust extremes of wealth and poverty, or about the waste of the earth's resources (in war and likewise in reckless competition short of war), we are denouncing a barbarous *principle,* not individuals, who themselves need to be saved from the slavery they would perpetuate. And we are not blind to the fact that injustice is to be found in the church itself, where it stands in glaring contradiction to the spirit and the teaching of our Lord and must speedily be removed; and in the lives of good people, hardened by custom and unable to see themselves as they really are—that is, in the light of God's judgment. We shall also be prepared to recognize injustice in ourselves. We share what we condemn, and are prepared to begin with penitence and renunciation.

We will not hate. And we will do what we can to check and to shame the hatred that already exists on many sides—political animosities within our own country, international and interracial antagonisms, jealousy and vindictiveness—and even, alas, within the church itself.

I wish I could draw a cartoon. It would picture a ramshackle house in a dirty yard; on the back stoop would be the ragged children helping their thin, bent, tired mother with a big family washing (taken in!); through the window you would see father and his friends playing poker, with plenty of chips and all the family funds staked on the draw. I hope the picture would need no explanation. Business, industry, finance are simply a *game*—for some men; and they cannot understand why anyone should whine if beaten. Moreover, they never even see the people who create the wealth with which they play. The stakes are enormous; and they do not realize that the money they gamble with is not really their own but is a sacred trust, under God, to be used for the welfare of their fellows; and that the only genuine and lasting satisfaction that surplus money can bring lies in such use, rather than as a way to power, exploitation, further gambling for still higher stakes.

But we do not hate those men. They are sick with a disease that infects us all; only, they are sicker than some others. Moreover a gambler is not necessarily rich: a poor man may be as reckless and irresponsible as a rich man, though he does not harm as many other persons. We have no wish to injure them; but we want the rules changed—or a better game substituted—so that men can live decently and with self-respect, and without succumbing either to the megalomania of wealth and power, or the malnutrition and anemia of poverty.

We find that in our Bible: the psalmist prayed, "Give me neither poverty nor riches"; and Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God?" And, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" Paul

said, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." This is not "radicalism": it is simply the old Christian gospel! And it applies at both ends of the social scale, to the "capitalist" and to the person on relief. Malvern merely draws the thread tight, and speaks the language of today: "The proper purpose of work is the satisfaction of human needs; hence Christian doctrine has insisted that production exists for consumption." That is, production exists for use, not for the accumulation of ever more and more profits, which do no good to those who possess them, and slowly destroy those who do not.

CONCLUSION

The ties between the Church of England and the Episcopal Church are so strong that "Malvern" means almost as much to us here as it does in the mother country. We are all members of the world-wide Anglican communion, a communion basically Catholic, but Protestant in interpretation and emphasis. It is a "liberal" communion, open to free social thinking, to historical and biblical criticism, to modern science, including politics, economics and sociology; and therefore it is as churchmen we meet to consider these issues, not merely as citizens. Our chief danger is that this very liberality of outlook may check and counter our deepest convictions; for we are schooled in tolerance, and our church's awards go as a rule to cautious men, who will upset no applecarts.

But we are not presuming to speak in the name of the church, either officially or unofficially. We are a group of churchmen and churchwomen, utterly in earnest about our world and our church, about the Kingdom of God and the gospel of Christ. And we are meeting here to consider what can be done—not to save the church (which will probably survive in some fashion!), but to consider under the guidance of God's Spirit, what can be done in a world on fire, and before it is too late.

For there *is* a chance—let us not ignore it—that our civilization may disappear—along with Nineveh and Tyre, and Babylon and the Empire of the Aztecs. Human civilization is a precarious flame, kept alive only by being handed on swiftly from one generation to the next; and it is not impossible that all the accumulated treasure, not only of Western civilization but of the whole race, slowly accumulated during the twelve thousand years since the Late Stone Age—it is not altogether impossible that all this accumulated treasure of humanity may be forfeited and destroyed in one generation. Hence the urgency of this day and hour.

On the other hand, "man's extremity is God's opportunity"; and in the very agonies of human affliction God walks and comes close to men: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." We are not far from the Kingdom of God, nor is it far from us; it is still "at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel."

In this conviction, let us dedicate ourselves once more, body, soul and spirit, heart and mind and will, all that we have and are, to seek God's Kingdom and God's righteousness.

The Tragic Trail of Sin

By Stephen J. England

I

FOR more than two generations the world, by a strangely general consent, has agreed to forget the ancient idea of sin. The agreement was reached on the basis of a widespread acceptance of the idea of evolution. Scientific investigation had apparently established the fact of an interminable upward progress in every phase of life, human or otherwise. This is true, it was held, of the physical, when we consider the development from an amoeba on the shore of some prehistoric sea; or of the social, in view of the rugged and primitive individualism of the savage which has grown into the complexities of modern society; or when we look at the evolution from the first primitive springs of superstitious dread in the presence of the unknown, through various ideas of God, up to the modern and "scientific" belief in immutable, natural law as the ruler of the universe. Evolution ruled the thinking of the race.

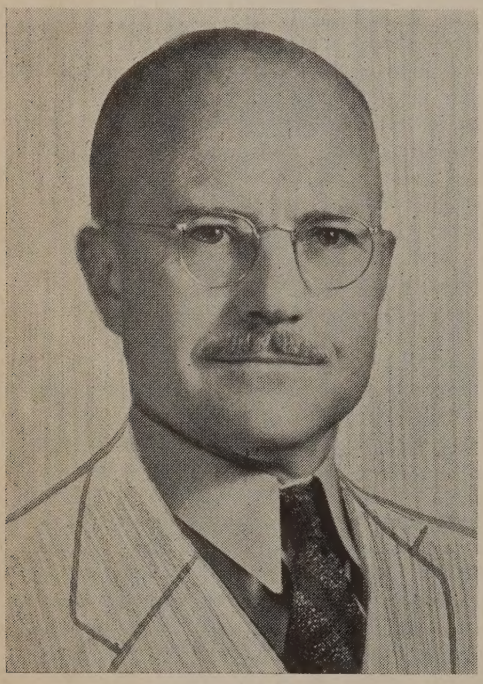
To many thinkers of the generations since Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859, the solution of all human problems seemed almost painfully simple. Given the belief in endless evolution upward, all we need is more time, and everything will automatically come out right. And since evolution plus time will solve all our problems, there is really little place in our thinking for God; perhaps belief in God is just a stage in our thinking, to be outgrown just as we have outgrown so many other elementary concepts in our mental and religious growth. As for sin, that is merely a biological survival of the days when our subhuman ancestors swung by their tails from the palms in some primeval forest, and there is no need to worry about it. A little while longer and that, too, will be outgrown and all will be well.

So ran the outline of the picture. Eliminate God; forget the idea that there is such a thing as sin; and go on to evolve into perfection, individually and socially. But then something happened to throw the beautiful and logical picture into confusion. Human plans began to go awry. Evolution, instead of solving all the problems, seemed to slip into reverse and produce more problems. Society and individuals alike awakened to the fact that the passage of time was adding to rather than taking from the difficulties. Sin, which had been so ceremoniously bowed out the front door, slipped in at the basement window, and forthwith proceeded to tear up the premises. And what happened may be called "the tragic trail of sin."

II

The tragic trail may be traced in every phase of human activity, social and individual. Look what has happened to the devices and institutions which society has developed for its own advancement—devices and institutions which were thought to have in them the solutions of all our problems. Here is the amazing inventiveness of the human mind, which in recent gen-

erations has done so much to ease the externals of living. Distance has been abridged by train and automobile and airplane and radio. Nobel invented his explosives, so necessary to engineering. Maxim invented the machine gun, making war incalculably deadly. Chemists learned how to extract nitrogen from the air, for the manufacture of fertilizers and explosives. Electricity has been subdued to the use of the home and industry and medicine. No list of inventions could possibly be complete; but the fact is that the present history of the world is a testimony to the fact that inventiveness, capable of such vast usefulness and the solution of so many problems, has been turned to



STEPHEN J. ENGLAND

the destruction of human life, and the question is now being raised whether inventions will not ultimately destroy the very civilization which begot them.

Society turned to education for the solution of its problems. It is now only a little over a hundred years since Horace Mann dreamed of universal education as the end of crime in this country. But with more education than Horace Mann ever imagined, we spend more than five times as much on crime as on education, and Warden Lawes, of Sing Sing prison, tells a lamentable tale of college graduates within prison walls.

We have recently passed through a political year, with a presidential election, and the hopes of all were turned to the candidates. Many and bold promises were made of the "more abundant life" which would follow the election of this or that candidate. But bitter experience has taught us that neither party has a monopoly on graft and corruption in office, while the broken planks in political platforms dismally remind us of the hopes engendered only to be disappointed by reliance on politics.

Economic remedies have been the fashion in America since the disasters of 1929 engulfed us in a depression, and many of them sound very good. Even the communists can make their schemes look good on paper. But every one of these schemes runs afoul of the fact that human nature is still greedy and inconsiderate and willing to take every advantage of anyone else. And they all fail us.

III

The tragic trail of sin can be traced in the field of the individual life. Sometimes we see the noblest human impulses perverted and twisted to the ruin of the life itself. So love becomes debased into lust, and the home is wrecked and the life blasted. So patriotism, that impulse which makes us capable of the noblest loyalty to the social group and the nation, is deliberately debauched by propaganda and demagoguery until it expresses itself only in the destruction of those of other races and tongues and political faiths. Even faith in God is twisted until it seems right to injure those who disagree, all in the name of faithfulness to religious principle.

Many other lives are lamed and weakened, if not ruined, by a nameless sense of frustration. There is the constantly recurring tendency to choose the worst instead of the best, even while we realize that that is just what we are doing. Our hopes of a happy and fruitful life are impeded by the consciousness of our own inadequacy to face life itself, by disillusionment and despair of limitless depth.

And all this may be called the tragic trail of sin. By this we may indicate that the trouble with our civilization and our lives lies in the twists of our human nature, and roots itself in disobedience to God. The name for this, sin, is old fashioned; but the thing itself is as up-to-date as tomorrow's newspaper. And by whatever name we call it, the tragic trail is there.

IV

The tragic trail of sin leads us back to the New Testament, that amazingly modern book. For the New Testament had the same idea that is gradually coming back to our thinking—the trouble with all of us is *ourselves*. And the New Testament centered what it had to say about sin and the world in what it told about Christ. The essence of his teaching was that the failures of the society of his day and the frustrations of individual life in his day were all due to the same cause—man's sin, which was man's disobedience to God. He saw clearly that no amount of social attainment or wealth can ever make the slightest difference when this problem is considered. In the third chapter of John, Jesus is pictured as telling the wealthy, cultured, powerful, educated, religious Nicodemus that his trouble was that he needed a new life, he must be born again. And in the very next chapter he told the woman at the well in Samaria—a crude, vulgar, illiterate, sordid woman—that her need was the water of life which should be in her a spring, never failing.

The rich young ruler was directed away from his wealth; the woman in Simon's house was given the message of cheer. It all amounted to saying that no amount of privilege can ever equal attained character, and no reach of acquisition of things can ever make up for the frustration of life which sin brings.

The solution of all our problems, Christ says, lies in the transformation of character. One of our contemporary preachers has well said: "The human drama is not playing itself out very well, and no shifting of the scenery can fix the drama up. Something profound must happen to the actors if it is to come out right." And the "something profound" is what the Christ can cause to happen.

V

Two conclusions follow from what we have said. The first affects us as workers in the church, builders of the Kingdom of God. That is, that Christianity is the absolutely indispensible need of our day and social order. The same preacher whom we quoted above has said: "Christianity is not a cosmetic to adorn the spiritual externals of our society. It is the medicine which can cure the inner wrongness that ruins life." Let us take heart in our work. The solution of society's problems lies here.

The other word is for ourselves. We can find our own lives transformed by the power of God in Christ which has been made available to us. The tragic trail of sin, as pictured in the New Testament, led across Galilee, up to Jerusalem, and through that city to a hill. It led up that hill, and there sin erected the cross and did to death the purest and noblest and best man that earth ever saw. But in that tragic ending of the trail of sin we find that it is broken. Somehow, in that death and the risen life that followed it, the tragic trail may be ended for us, and in Christ we may receive the power that will enable us to bring our lives into beauty and usefulness and service in his name.

The Universal Guilt

I SAW One greeted with a kiss;
A son of night performed the deed;
And then they led away my Lord
To be despised, to suffer, bleed;
And I stood by, nor said a word,
Nor was I by his mute grief stirred.

I saw One wear a crown of thorns;
They placed it rudely on his brow,
And pressed it down; and as he bowed
They cried, "Messiah—see him now!"
And I stood by, nor moved a limb
To save my Lord, or comfort him.

I saw One hanging on a cross;
As in each hand they drove the nail,
He groaned and cried, "O God, forgive!"
They laughed and shouted, "King, all hail!"
And I with them was standing there,
As he breathed out his dying prayer.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

The Easy and the Hard Triumph

BY KING D. BEACH

And the multitudes cried . . . "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. Matthew 21:9.

The Son of man must suffer many things . . . and be killed. Mark 8:31.

THE Triumphant Entry might have been considered the brilliant climax of a successful career. Jesus planned for it, accepted the acclamations, received the recognitions popularly reserved for kingly dignity—the ass, and the palm branches and garments spread before him. He even assumed some of the implied authority, cleansing the temple and cursing the fig tree.

Why, then, was he not content with this triumph? Was it not clear recognition that his messiahship was generally accepted? Did it not afford him opportunity, building on this acceptance, to clarify his teachings, guide his apostles, confirm his example, extend his influence? Even though he might expect a temporary reaction from the enthusiasms of the cheering multitude, was he not assured an increasingly effective ministry?

A SURPASSING TRIBUTE NOT ENOUGH

Why must the Triumphant Entry be completed by sad Gethsemane and cross-crowned Calvary? Might it not be reverently asked, "What more did Jesus want?" Would not any reasonable man be content when, with small exception, the entire population of the capital city, swollen by Passover crowds which included representative people from all Jewish centers, was ready to acclaim him as the looked-for Messiah and to follow him?

The Triumphant Entry was, however, not enough. It was too easy. It did not dig deep enough nor soar high enough. It was undiscerning acceptance rather than personal commitment. It was impulsive consent rather than heartfelt conviction. It provided no remedy for man's deep sinfulness, or for the selfish, proud, cruel urges which fight back against Christ. It failed to expose the tragic results of self-content, envy, hatred and lust of power. It failed to disclose the beauty and the practicability of forgiveness, of self-sacrifice, of redeeming love. It failed to prove the patient, yearning grace of God. It failed to offer Christ the opportunity of sharing the tragedy of man's sin, suffering with him the innocent for the guilty. It failed to demonstrate that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have eternal life." It failed to reveal Christ as "the way, the truth and the life"—to lift him up so that all men would be drawn to him. The easy triumph of Palm Sunday could, therefore, be no substitute for the hard triumph of Gethsemane, Calvary and the empty tomb.

The temptation to substitute the easy way of gain-

ing surface results for the hard and often discouraging way of grappling deep-lying difficulties was not entirely new to Jesus.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

The three temptations in the early ministry of Jesus dramatized a struggle he faced again and again. Why not produce magic bread which would stimulate the spiritual capacities of people into lush growth without effort on their part or his? Why not avoid the slow disheartening process of guiding individuals through spiritual infancy and youth into adulthood? Must he wait to persuade people to appropriate the truth for themselves? Was it necessary to put up with their dullnesses, defections and disloyalties? Could he not compel obedience by pomp and power and glory and sword? By the spectacular display of casting himself from a pinnacle of the temple, why not overawe them rather than await the slow process of persuading their judgment and of winning their allegiance?

The same temptation returned to haunt Jesus in Gethsemane. Must the cup of pain and death be drained to bitterest dregs? Must he be forsaken, denied, reviled, spat upon and finally crucified? Was there no easier way? No, there was no easier way if he were to be true to God's will.

We, as well as Jesus, must repeatedly choose between the easy way and the hard way.

Let us discriminate. The hard way is not to be chosen because it is hard, nor the easy way avoided because it is easy. Brains are ours to be used. Devices that save labor, friction and time should be thankfully employed. There is no virtue in difficulties as difficulties, nor is there disparagement in avoiding them. On the other hand, the easy way is a delusion when it is easy because it slides over rather than shoulders responsibility, when it palliates rather than cures, flatters rather than wins, cajoles rather than persuades.

Easy ways of gaining happiness allure us. Real happiness is ours only when the entire gamut of our being shares in it. The body needs to share joy to make it genuine; also the social nature, judgment, reason, conscience need to share in it. Any pleasure is destructive of happiness if, although satisfying some physical appetite or convivial impulse, it violates one's sense of fairness and justice, or is disloyal to loved ones and to God. We add, also, that mental and social happiness which disregards the body is attenuated and incomplete. No evil inheres in physical pleasures when they aid rather than violate mental and spiritual joys. They make, on the contrary, a genuine contribution to complete happiness.

THE EASY WAY OFTEN PERILOUS

What spurious ways of gaining happiness delude people, and are used to exploit them! What are some of them? Alcoholic stupefaction which gains physical and social pleasures by putting to sleep the mental and spiritual qualities which knit us to God. Spite and revenge and greedy gain which give animal satisfaction but violate kindness, justice and righteousness. Mass hysteria which provides the pleasures of cooperation and human association by injuring personality and outraging reason. Satisfaction of physical appetites in dissipations which disorganizes self and betrays friends. The gaining of material possessions, which too often clutters life with non-essentials and makes people too busy for kindness and helpfulness. Gambling, in all its forms, which schemes to gain wealth without honestly earning it or making genuine contribution to the well-being of others. Overstimulated excitement in sports and amusements which overemphasizes one group of pleasures and underrates and blurs moral distinctions. Falsehood and dishonesty which seek to gain approval and personal advantage without rightfully earning it.

KING D. BEACH

Easy ways of getting people to work together also entice us. The easy way to achieve unity in home, school, business, church and state is that of dictatorship. It is easy for the autocrat, since he need never consider the opinions and rights of others, or win their judgment and cooperation, or alter plans which his genius evolves. It is easy for the people, since they avoid thinking, planning and sharing responsibility. They need only to obey, work and fight as ordered.

The hard way is the democratic way. It is hard because it is frequently involved in turmoil and delay until conflicting ideas and opposing plans are amalgamated into a unit, because it rejects the direct and cruel methods of autocracy, because it loses the support of those who refuse to learn from others. But it produces an infinitely richer and more varied program than autocracy, it sustains its slow advance against counter-attacks and reactions, accomplishes the ultimate objective of growing great personalities, exalts

the individual in his eternal worth and glorifies persons rather than things. It builds on a broad foundation, stable and lasting and living.

WHERE THE CHURCH HAS ERRED

The church is often deluded into easy ways. Why should pastor and people study carefully the resources and the needs of the church and community? Why should they discover, by trial and by error, workable plans? Why should they develop cooperative enterprises with other churches and organizations which do not want to cooperate? Why should they work, year in and year out, with a discouraging boys' or girls' group? Why call upon members, looking after them in love, or search out the careless, encourage the defeated, or patiently build in people those confidences and convictions and affections which cause them to choose Christ's way?

Must life be wasted in methods so difficult and slow and apparently so barren? Let us hire an eloquent, go-getting preacher who will at once crowd the church, fill the collection plates with greenbacks, leaving nothing for members to do but to count the collection and to gloat over less favored churches. Or let us win the support of some millionaire who will delight to repair the roof, restore the heating plant, and pay the deficit. May not the church, indeed, be satisfied to announce the second coming of Christ or the omnipotence of God and to wait for Christ and God to bring in the Kingdom?

Most of us want an easy way of growing in Christian experience and character. Colonel T. E. Lawrence tells of two Arab chiefs who were brought to London, given many honors, entertained lavishly in a luxurious hotel. When they were about to return to Arabia, Colonel Lawrence asked what they would like to take back with them, promising to provide it if possible. After much thought they replied: "We would like to have two hot-water faucets to take home with us. It would be a great thing in Arabia to turn them on and to have hot water any time."

THINGS THAT 'YE OUGHT TO HAVE DONE'

As the Arab chiefs failed to realize that back of the gadget in the wall must be a system of plumbing and heating, of water mains and reservoirs, so we often forget that back of Christian growth must be regular feeding and care. Faith in God, for instance, is not something to be turned on when death looms. Faith is the cumulative result of discovering for one's own self in actual life the practicability of Christ's truth; it is learning through hard personal experience that God can and does overrule even tragedies and defeats and makes them contribute to our development and usefulness; it is practicing consistently the presence of God in public and private worship, and not pretending to worship God on the golf course; it is learning in history and biography and personal experience that God guides unto himself those who sincerely and continually seek him.

We often employ easy methods of following Jesus, though he forewarned his followers against them. We punctiliously observe minor regulations and yet think nothing amiss when the favored few live in enervating luxury, and when forty-one families out of one hundred in fortunate United States exist in poverty stifling to body, mind and soul. We attain perfection in such ritualistic precisions as eating the host without touching the teeth to it, and yet believe that if each person seeks his selfish advantage in daily work it will create the common welfare, and yet brand as communistic any suggestion that the surplus created by science and technology be used for the welfare of all of God's children of earth rather than for the surfeit of the few.

We observe fasts and calendar and devotional regulations to the jot and tittle, and yet harbor jealousy, hate, revenge and prejudice, even thinking that we exalt Jesus by persecuting the race which produced him. We repeat and think that we believe creedal statements of astonishing truths, and never glimpse what revolutions they would produce in our daily living and church and civilization if we really believed them. We become so enslaved to engagement books and calendars and so concerned about the safety of our complex organizations that we think we cannot possibly aid the wounded and underprivileged. We choose the church which interferes least with our accustomed habits and selfish interest, and we seek to keep on the good side of God on the lightest possible terms.

IF JESUS HAD CHOSEN THE EASY TRIUMPH

Suppose that Jesus had decided that the easy way of Palm Sunday was sufficient and that the hard way of Good Friday was unnecessary. Suppose, as a writer recently did, that, when the band of soldiers approached Gethsemane, Peter had pleaded: "Master, there is one chance of escape—a secret passage through the hedge. Hasten, there is not a moment to lose." As Jesus hesitated, Peter continued: "You must be with us to teach and to live the new doctrine. We will be helpless without you. The multitude, which called you 'Blessed,' will again open their ears and minds to you. You shall live and go on from triumph to triumph."

Suppose that Jesus had yielded, had been secreted for a few days, had escaped from the city in disguise, and had continued his ministry after opposition had died down. What would have been the result if Jesus had chosen such an easy triumph, and avoided the hard triumph? A modern encyclopedia, if it mentioned him, would then have such an item as this: "Jesus of Nazareth. Born of humble Jewish parentage. He claimed to be the expected Messiah of the Jewish people. He gathered a few disciples and professed to perform miracles. His teachings were of high order. He lived to an old age. The doctrines which he preached never took root. At last he died in obscurity."

"The son of man *must* suffer many things . . . and be crucified." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; *if so be that we suffer with him that we may be glorified together.*"

'It Is Finished!'

By Alfred William Price

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." John 19:30.

THE weary hours have almost passed; the watch by the cross is nearly over; and just before Jesus passes we hear this triumphal cry, "It is finished!" Joy was beginning to break through sorrow—life's duty is now fulfilled; he has chosen duty over safety, the fatal right over the comfortable wrong. And he is learning that such a choice brings its immediate compensations—a heart full of exultation, a sense of inward well-being, a consciousness of being true to self and therefore true to God.

If we look upon him with pity, it does us no credit. If we look upon him with wonder, we ought to feel shame. Envy is the only graceful emotion we can feel, because envy indicates the ability in us to understand, and in the truest sense to sympathize. The conditions of modern life are making that envy more and more difficult, and it is precisely at that spot that his teaching and example press upon us with deepest penetration and sharpest cutting edge.

The spirit was so real to him, and it is so theoretical to us. The satisfactions of the spirit, of conscience, of the soul were so vivid to him; and they are so secondary with us. As between a comfortable spirit in a tormented body, or a tormented spirit in a comfortable body, his choice did not falter. But our choice usually falters and often fails. The comfortable body is so important to us, and the tormented soul—well, we can drug it with passing indifference if we will, or we can put up with it somehow.

SUCCESS BY FAILURE

"It is finished!" Life's duty is now fulfilled; Christ's work is accomplished. Yes, his is the triumph of failure; for by worldly standards Christ was a failure. The world has written failure upon every page of his ministry. Tacitus, the great Roman historian, does not regard Jesus of sufficient importance to mention him by name, but just refers to Christianity as a sect which originated with a Jew who was put to death in Judea during the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

The Gospels are filled with the stories of Jesus' failures. Nicodemus, a nobleman of Jerusalem, comes to Jesus for instruction, listens to his appealing words, and goes away unconvinced and unconverted.

The Master preaches his first sermon in the synagogue at his old home in Nazareth. Surely success will await him there. The record reads otherwise. "They were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city."

He is about to close his ministry in Galilee where he had probably spent two whole years "going about doing good." We would expect at such a time many professions of loyalty, especially from those who were his closest friends. The sad fact, however, is stated by St. John that his very brothers chided him because of his defeats, "for neither did his brethren believe in him."

The arrest of Jesus by the chief-priests and the Roman cohort is successfully accomplished through the treacherous kiss of one of his own followers. Now that Jesus is a prisoner, helpless in his shackles, surely the hearts of his disciples will ring true. At the time when he most needs a friend is he to stand there friendless? Is there not one among the eleven who has the courage to go down with his Master in defeat? Was not Christ the exponent of principles which would be a man's highest glory to defend, and if needs be, die for?

Alfred William Price

Has it to be written upon the eternal pages, and sounded in the ears of posterity, that when Jesus failed, he failed alone? Yes—for it is written: "then all his disciples forsook him and fled."

HIMSELF HE COULD NOT SAVE

He dies the death of the world's worst criminal, with the shouts of the vulgar onlookers tearing his very heart to pieces: "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross, and the world will believe you." Thus the world ever shouts at the man who has courageously labored and lost. "Come down from the cross you have made for yourself; forsake the principles you hold more precious than life; make a compromise with your adversaries; change your conceptions of righteousness; win the world in the world's own way; come down from the cross and the world will believe you."

But there comes a time in the lives of all good men when they cannot come down from the cross, a time when the strongest word they can utter is "I cannot,"

time when it would be craven cowardice for a man to attempt to save himself; a time when the man who is waging a battle for truth and righteousness must be willing to die defeated rather than live and thus make his whole life an infamous lie.

And so the time came to Jesus and he remained upon the cross and died. His enemies spoke truer than they supposed, "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

Though he failed, was his life a failure? History knows of no greater success than the life of Jesus Christ. He knew full well the ultimate victory of his defeat. In the upper room, when the cross loomed large before him, he consoled the fearful eleven: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In his last moments, when the mist is gathering, and the cold stream of death is calling upon him to cross it, and the end awaits him, he has still the strength to cry, "It is finished." Precious beyond treasure are those words to every despairing soul, for they tell us that the life that loves God and man, lives true to conscience and forgets consequences is a complete life wherever it commences and wherever it closes; that the divinest life may be lived in the shortest hours. If we could live our little lives stirred by this conviction, what genuine happiness, what abiding peace, what holy optimism, would be ours!

'WHO SUFFERS MOST HAS MOST TO GIVE'

Studdert-Kennedy gives us the only satisfying philosophy of life's defeats:

> Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
> Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth.
> For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
> And he who suffers most has most to give.

Let us take courage then amidst the disappointments, the despondencies, the defeats of life, for if we are true to truth, conforming to conscience and daring to do our duty, we may frequently fail, but we shall never be failures. God's heroes are the men who are not afraid to fail in a good cause. Oh, for the strength to shun success if it means the cheapening of character, the sacrifice of all that is sacred, the polluting of principles and the violations of virtue! A man must lose more than money and friends and position and possessions to be a failure; a man must have more than these to be a success. He is a failure who barters his conscience for coin, his principles for promotion, and his manhood for a livelihood. Our hopes may vanish away; the expectations of a lifetime may leave us; our dearest desires and our highest ambitions may depart; friendship and comradeship may be severed, and we may seem alone, but as long as our honor, our faith, our convictions remain unsullied, we need never fear defeat.

With this sure confidence in the overwhelming success of righteousness, and in the absolute justice of the final judgment, let us take up our lives anew, striving only to find the faith that makes the faithful to walk in the light of truth, to make the conscience our compass, desiring to be right rather than rich, to be good rather than great. Then if we fail bravely we shall not truly fail, but shall be also conquerors—though we be last in this life we shall not be least in the life which is to come.

The divine anointing awaits him who watched and waited and toiled and prayed and failed, and can yet be glad. May we place our lives in the helping of him who although he failed, was not a failure; who could say at the last: "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."

The Resurrections of History

By Fred E. Luchs

And rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher. Matthew 27:60b.

AND then they went home—thinking that the conclusion had been written. The soldiers, smelling death, and with a feeling of having upheld the status quo, had finished their bloody business. Law and order had once again been established. The deed was done. Now they were on their way back to the barracks. They did not feel much about the matter one way or the other—but they had done their duty. So they marched off.

The Sanhedrin went home—gloating over their victory. They were congratulating one another on having put an end to another young radical. Had they not had the backing of every patriotic and religious organization in Jerusalem? Had they not saved the law from blasphemy? Had they not stopped further amendment of the laws of Moses by this young hothead? These men had feeling in the matter. Their emotions were interwoven in this issue. They not only had done their duty for the moment—they had nipped in the bud this beginning radicalism. Wearing conceit like a halo, they walked down the hill with all the bravado which comes with self-righteousness, and went to the high priest's house to celebrate the ending of the matter.

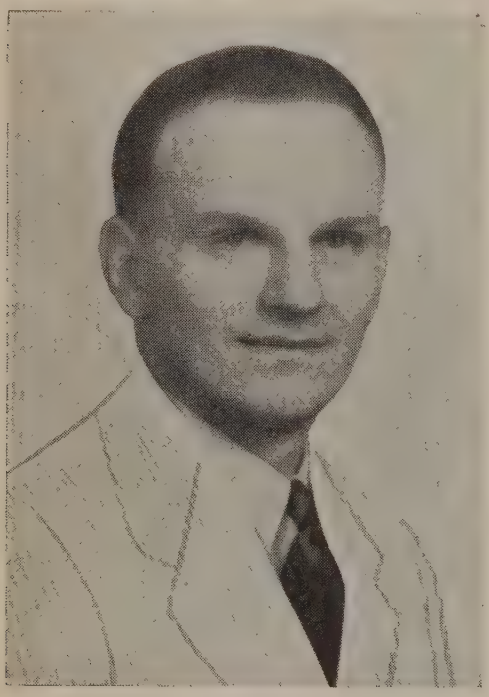
THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

The friends of Jesus went home. Silently, apart from the soldiers and priests, they crept away dreading even the sound of living feet. They moved pathetically homeward. See them as they pass. A demoniac who had been cured by Jesus who no longer feared even the wrath of Satan; a prostitute forgiven by his love; a child welcomed into religious fellowship by his tender hands. They were his followers, once bright with hope, now deadened with despair. Their king, their master, their teacher—gone. With his going had gone their hopes and their dreams. It was the end.

Thirty years elapse. Many of the soldiers, through debauchery or war, have gone to an early death. The Sanhedrin has been replaced by another group, still loyal to the old law. We now stand on Mars Hill in

Athens, and hear one preach some strange new doctrine. Let us listen: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions I found an altar with this inscription, 'To the Unknown God.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. This God hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised Jesus from the dead."

Three hundred years later, and this crucified one has touched the hearts of men in all parts of the then known world. Constantine, in 317 A. D., recognized Christianity as the religion of the Empire. Centuries roll on. Men, women and children are freed from



FRED E. LUCHS

slavery, exploitation, superstition, illiteracy and disease. With the task still incomplete the followers of the Crucified still dream of a new heaven and a new earth.

Life is a conflict between these two propositions. Those three groups who walked away from the closed tomb that afternoon bear out the statement, write the proposition, that the end is the end. But we today, looking from afar off—have seen history say that the end is not the end. What others call the end is only a stepping stone to a higher level. Individuals today are caught in that same conflict. A mother at the grave of a child, torn with this conflict. Is the grave a conclusion—or a transition? Democracy on the Continent defeated by fascism. Does that herald the beginning of the end of democracy—or the injection of new lifeblood into it? Christianity in Russia—abolished forever—or the rebirth of religion superior to the decadent Christianity under the czar? Unemployment—the end of useful service for an individual, or a training school wherein he may learn patience and see the injustices of an unchristian world?

Look at that tomb—a hole hewn out of limestone, so commonplace that you probably would not have noticed it in passing. I have seen such tombs in Palestine, and there is nothing decorative about them. They lack the luxury of our modern mausoleums and the dignity of Westminster Abbey.

TRUTH CANNOT BE BURIED

But what does that tomb in Joseph's garden say about these two propositions? First, the tomb (as a symbol) says that truth cannot be buried. How these Pharisees must have chuckled as they stood outside the tomb! Mockingly they cried: "Within that tomb lies the young man who proclaimed to the masses, 'I am the Truth.'" And then they cried, "Amen and Amen"—and went home convinced that the truth was buried. Now the Sanhedrin was right when it thought that some things can be buried—and will stay there until someone redigs them. The one-talent man in the parable dug a hole and placed his one talent in it. There it remained intact, buried until he went to get it. I recall a cabin that some of us built in the woods of Pennsylvania a score of years ago. Each summer we hauled out food and then digging a hole in the ground we buried it. There it remained until we came for it. It had no power to come forth. But—"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again." It has within itself the potency to emerge from the grave.

The Roman Empire tried to bury Christianity. In catacombs, prisons, coliseums they buried it—but Christianity rose up and captured the Empire. Paul, prior to his conversion, tried to bury Christianity; but the more he persecuted it the more it drew him to its loving arms. Men burned Bruno, humiliated Copernicus and hissed Darwin for promulgating their views. But truth withstands burning, humiliation, hissing, and today their views are our views. The authorities buried John Bunyan within prison walls to put an end to his fanatic religious teaching. But John Bunyan in prison wrote *Pilgrim's Progress,* and Truth flew out of that dungeon into a semi-pagan world and gave men a vision of something better than the monotonous drudgery of seventeenth century England. England banished the Pilgrims to Holland; the English government thought that the end was the end. But the Pilgrims transplanted in America proved that the end was only the beginning of a struggle which wrested a colony from the mother country and gave birth to a great modern nation. The historic tomb teaches us that the truth cannot be buried.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

The tomb of Jesus teaches us that Love cannot be buried. Let us stand again outside the tomb on that crucifixion day. The Sanhedrin is singing its paean of victory. "Where is the God of love this upstart talked about? Where are those devoted followers of his—his disciples—did they not flee last night when one of them betrayed him? This radical talked about his mission of love? Where are the results?" And then they

clapped one another on the back and cried, "So be it to all such revolutionists!"

They buried love that day but it rose again in the first Christian century, carrying with it the power that would win its enemies and take root in the hearts of hungry folk. Religious respectables in Jesus' day tried to restrain love, tried to confine it to the "best" people; but expressed in the human Jesus it went down into the slums and lifted publicans, harlots and sinners. The soldiers tried to restrain love by hanging it on the cross but it came down from the cross and cried out: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Jailers tried to bury love by imprisoning Paul, but love won the jailers. On some of our mission fields the name of Christ cannot be mentioned; the authorities in these foreign fields forbid it. But people are won to this way of love, not through a name, but through a contagious love lived by the missionaries. Neither the missionaries nor the authorities can buy love; it rises up and wins the people.

A SYMBOL OF MAN'S HOPE

The only scene where the Oberammergau Passion Play was for me unconvincing was the resurrection scene. Those famous German players failed to paint the picture of the resurrection. But how could they? You cannot portray the power of the tomb in a single human act. It is a process which extends through history, which is beyond the passing mood, but which is as convincing as life itself. Look at it! Just a limestone tomb with no more chance of becoming historical than a wasted moment. But that tomb which one moment signified death became in time the symbol of man's hope, freed him from the tyranny of the present moment, and helped him to transcend the processes of nature in which he seems to be irrevocably involved.

Life is a conflict between two propositions: but we have chosen our proposition. The story in which we read that they "rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher" became, though the hand of history—"and they looked and behold the stone was rolled away."

Our time needs above all else people who feel that they have a rendezvous with life which must be kept; who identify themselves with the hopes and struggles of their fellow men. About us everywhere today we find the triumph and the sorrow that comes through the contrary teaching that men are the products of economic or biological determinism, and that the forces that have made them can as easily destroy them. This is a philosophy most congenial to dictators. It flourishes not only where men are regarded merely as fodder for futile wars or as cogs in a totalitarian machine, but also everywhere that men exploit other men for their own advantage.

The world will not be fit for human habitation until it has become "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," until its people have developed those inner qualities of mind and spirit that produce great living.

Robert Gordon Sproul.

Let Easter Morning Dawn!

By Perry E. Gresham

And Mary of Magdala and the other Mary remained there sitting before the tomb. Matthew 27:61.

THE meaning of the depressing grief of the two Marys before the tomb was never clearer than it is today. This was more than the mournful and frightened lonesomeness of sudden and violent bereavement. That in itself has broken hearts and left brave people all forlorn. But the crucifixion coupled personal loss with the sense of tragic futility that resulted from the frightening belief that the righteous processes had been defeated. It was the bleak and desolate disappointment that came with the realization that the universe was, after all, completely unfriendly to the sincere and searching soul. The best they could imagine or dream had perished. It was as if the Gods had gone home and left two sorrowing women before the hard, lifeless stones which were symbolic of the hard heart of the world in which men live.

Today the scene is re-enacted in Coventry and Warsaw, Shanghai and Amsterdam. Women with bleeding hearts weep in bewildered grief for their beloved dead before the wreckage of their homes and churches. Not only their husbands and children are dead, but peace and love have perished. The Kingdom of God has been crucified by the brutal bestiality of modern warfare. The treasures of man's greatest creative achievements have been shattered into rubble. The dream of brotherhood is dead. The precious growth of gentleness is utterly abandoned. They look out across the landscape of their homeland to see desolation and misery. The cosmic powers in which they put their trust have been put to death. Their cherished dreams of love and beauty lie buried in a heap of stone. Half dazed, they "remain there sitting before the tomb."

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD SITS BEFORE A TOMB

The sensitive Christian is as acutely aware of tragedy. He belongs to a community of gentleness and love that has been growing for twenty centuries. Central in the cherished values of the devotees of Jesus is the happiness and welfare of persons. They have envisioned a reign of God which would make mankind a family with mutual concern and love for one another. They have proclaimed an age of peace and righteousness. Alas! today the Christian sits before the tomb. Force and brutality have triumphed. Death and destruction are on the loose. Famine, pestilence and sorrow range unleashed across the nations of the earth, striking terror to the heart of the innocent and despondency to the countenance of the strong. "Without a language but a cry," the baffled follower of the Prince of Peace sits weeping for his crucified Master.

In the ivy mantled halls of Gothic architecture that house the universities of the world, sits the scholar who had dreamed of a utopia of peace and plenty. He

has searched the heavens to wrest from them the secrets that would enable man to find himself a cosmic home. He has tried the deep and scrutinized the land. He has turned the microscope upon the minute particles of nature to find the energy that would work for man. He has observed the ingenuity and skill of man that can build machines to do his work and make the elements his slaves. Through the leaded glass of a narrow window there appears the ghastly vision of a shattered dream. The mind of man has turned his mastery of nature into a giant arsenal for the ruthless march to power. His longed-for "age of reason" has yielded to the stark reality of a devastating clash of interest. Reason also sits in despair before the tomb.

The Marys, bowed with grief, could not see all the factors. Could they have peered beyond their tears, they would have seen the purple morning breaking over the lily-scented gardens of Arimathaea. They would have seen the scattered disciples rallying back to the Holy City to begin the march of the church across the troubled centuries. They would have felt the thrill of victory and the new return of faith and confidence in life. They would have felt the thrill of the union with their fellows in the newborn fellowship of love which would arise like a phoenix out of the ashes of tragedy. The soul overwhelmed with sorrow cannot see. Bitterness and desolation numb the tender sensitivities and leave the victim impervious to faith and hope and love. With all the evidence they could have said: "When it gets dark enough, the stars come out!" But grief had struck them blind.

THE TOMB A HERALD OF VICTORY

Today discouragement and fear have left us blind. The burst of bombs and flare of rockets have obscured the stars. The promise of tomorrow stands veiled by vain regret. Less wary than old Faust, we have cried out to the moments we enjoyed in other days: "Ah stay, thou art so fair!" But when Faust said that, the Devil had him. Old Mephistopheles had wagered for the scholar's soul that one bright ecstasy would blind his victim to all else. Well did the careful doctor see that every hour of bliss must have an end which leaves past pleasure in a heap of smoldering ashes. As all the hopes of yesterday fade out, our bitter wailings of lament become so loud that we cannot hear the breeze of evening whisper that the day will break in splendor when the grief becomes a horrid memory.

The clash of armies and the scream of bombs are man's bungling, shameful way of breaking down the barriers of decadent cultures. The interpenetration of the social heritages of the European states has been a crying need for centuries. Blinded by cupidity, the lords of power have resisted social change and human cooperation until today the terrible and relentless consequences are being realized. The dictators kill and plunder like clumsy dinosaurs about to lose their being in the scheme of life, but the people will live on. Life did not die with the giant race of lizards; it moved on to higher levels when the last *Tyrannosaurus rex* was dead. Mankind may find a new millennium when the last vain struggle for dominion has spent itself in futile slaughter. The breakup of the old order always leaves the "Kingdom of Heaven at hand," if we can but claim it and declare our new allegiance. Heartbroken by the perished joys of yesterday, we sit and weep without the slightest awareness that Easter is about to dawn.

REDEMPTION ALWAYS AT HAND

The possibility of tragedy is always with us. The debacle of the present war is only a symptom of the hatred, malice and unbounded greed that always lurk beneath the surface of society. The inclination of the foes of Jesus toward his crucifixion was just as real

PERRY E. GRESHAM

and present at Bethany while he shared the pleasures of the home of friends as it was when, spat upon, he was condemned to die. The attitudes of war were just as much at hand at Versailles and Munich as they are on any battlefield today. Only when they burst in terror do they overwhelm us with the devastating sense of their reality. But just as we are blind to imminent tragedy when we partake of bliss, we are insensitive to imminent redemption when we are submerged in loss and defeat. The attitudes of gentleness and peace and love are just as real today as when serenity was in the world and the dove could bear an olive branch.

There seems to be no easy way for the Easter morn to break and the reign of God to come. Our own experience bears witness to the fact that the greatest growth has come from times of stress and strain which threatened to destroy. Our births are touched with pain; our lives are beset with difficulties that educe the man. The stark three crosses stand athwart the

adiant Syrian sky. The decline of Greece made possible the legacy of Rome. The fall of Rome was prerequisite to the triumph of the Christian church. For many years the march of science with its benign service to humanity rolled forward with the dreadful clank of mechanism, which crushed the spiritual poetry of St. Francis of Assisi.

The school buildings of America were a menace to the lives of youth until the Collinwood School in a suburb of Cleveland was the scene of shocking disaster. The brick walls and wooden corridors were the accepted mode of school construction till one day the house caught fire. The brick walls made a perfect chimney. The flames leaped out the roof. The panic-stricken children massed against the doors that opened inward, and a holocaust of human lives was offered up to man's unwillingness to foresee consequences. Legislators, architects and school boards everywhere set up the cry that made the schools a safer place for all our youth. It required a crucifixion to usher in an Easter. Shaw's matchless lines in *Joan of Arc* are to the point: "Great God! Must Christ be crucified in every age to save those who have no imagination?"

When pain besets us and the night is dark, when unnerving sorrow leaves us desolate and numb, let us remember that the deepest tragedy may be the prelude to the highest triumph. Grief purges out our idle wickedness and brings us face to face with hard reality. It breaks our stranglehold on dying values. What balm of healing would have come to Mary could she but have realized that flesh-and-blood companionship with Jesus, beautiful as it was, was trivial and petty in comparison with the growth of gentleness of community liberated from all ties of temporal accident.

AGAINST A BLACK BACKGROUND—RESURRECTION!

The triumph of the Easter dawn could never come at more welcome time! Bewildered human beings sit weeping before the tomb of their crucified values of yesterday. The morning tells them that new joy and beauty will be theirs tomorrow. New cities, orderly and clean, will rise where slums and ugliness prevailed before the crash of bombs. New plenty will be offered to the sons of men where once insecurity and poverty was the only hope. The machinery that has been used to kill and destroy can be used to supply the highest standard of life and health ever known to man. The hours of leisure will be filled with pleasant play and happy fellowship. The peace will be a peace of justice and mercy. God has not forsaken us. The victory of the resurrection is declared in every blossoming shrub and opening bud this April morning.

The exultant disciples did not find the perfect Kingdom coming down from heaven on that glorious Easter day. They found the same recalcitrant institutions, the same stubborn greed and malice, in the streets of Palestine. Why, then, did they weep on Friday evening and rejoice on Sunday morning? Their Master lived! The universe was good, after all. The power that works for righteousness was mightier than destruction. Their attitudes were changed. God was on the side of goodness, love and redemption. They had been given the "oil of joy, for mourning"— "sorrow and sighing had fled away."

Today as Easter comes we find the same old brutal, striving world; but the sense of cosmic catastrophe is gone. We know that even in the midst of failure and conflict, love still lives. No sorrow can last forever; no loss is absolute. The crisis of the hour in which we live is the great opportunity to usher in the blessed community of peace and righteousness which is called the Kingdom of Heaven. Our science is not a failure, but we have used it with a caveman's mind. We still haven't learned how to make it serve our common welfare. Our confusion and despair have dulled us to the untold opportunities of this age in which we live. God sends us Easter to restore our sanity and faith.

'OUT OF THE GLOOM, THE BLOOM'

The faultless prose of Exupéry tells the story of the pilot who was pioneering in a hazardous flight at night above the South American terrain. A tornado swept the land beneath him when he neared his destination. The radio warned him that a landing was impossible. His fuel supply was running low. Time sped by. Communication was cut off by the storm. A few dips into the swirling clouds told him of a horrid twisting death if he attempted to descend. He realized his plight and with deliberate skill nosed the mighty aircraft upward from the raging storm clouds. He gained altitude rapidly until the confusion was left far below and only the still, white stars shone round him in the peaceful equatorial night. Here at last was peace and beauty, at the very last.

Above the whirling madness of our day the stars still shine. Beyond the inky blackness of the crucifixion are the everlasting stars of imperishable love and hope. After the strange dark interlude the first bright rays of the Easter sun will reflect a million rainbows from dewdrops on the flowers of Arimathaea.

Fronting the night, the light;
Out of the gloom, the bloom.

Let Easter morning dawn!

This I Know

THEY list for me the things I cannot know:
Whence came the world? What Hand flung out the light
Of yonder stars? How could a God of Right
Ordain for earth an ebbless tide of woe?
Their word is true; I would not scorn their doubt
Who press their questions of the how and why.
But this I know: that from the star-strewn sky
There comes to me a peace that puts to rout
All brooding thoughts of dread, abiding death;
And too I know, with every fragrant dawn,
That Life is Lord; that, with the Winter gone,
There cometh Spring, a great, reviving Breath.
It is enough that life means this to me;
What death shall mean, some sunny Morn shall see.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

'Persuaded'

By Ralph Wakefield

I am persuaded. Romans 8:38.

TODAY'S voices, while often dogmatically authoritative, are very frequently not persuasive. Outside pressures may meet seemingly yielded obedience, but only inner persuasions can ultimately be relied upon to motivate life. Men may outwardly "goosestep," may seem totally submissive to church or state or social dictation, yet within may be in a state of total rebellion and fully persuaded of a fealty to quite other standards of conduct and life than those that are authoritatively demanded.

When exigencies arise in life or circumstance we are motivated by our persuasions, and we act in harmony with them. That is why in so brief a time the most unexpected things may happen to human orders or to individuals. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Just a few years have passed since we sang concerning national prohibition, "It is in the Constitution and it's there to stay," but it did not. Not so long ago we fought "a war to end wars," a war to "make the world safe for democracy," but the world's mind was not persuaded and the peace of Versailles, which superimposed a treaty of vengeance upon the vanquished, led directly to the present world chaos.

PERSUASIONS MUST BE WELL-FOUNDED

Many persuasions may not rest on adequate foundations of truth and reality. We realize that anarchists and nihilists as well as many economists of the nineteen-twenties, who predicted an era of continued and unprecedented prosperity may have been sincere in their persuasions but their convictions were inadequate in their foundation. In the church we dared to speak of the "evangelization of the world in this generation," only to see after twenty centuries of missionary labor that when we scratched the surface of our so-called Christian civilization we found the barbarian underneath.

It is evident, therefore, that our persuasions are the sources out of which our activities come, and they determine both our purposes and courses of life. Therefore, if they arise only out of segments of truth, out of nationalisms, out of the urges of faulty reason based on partial knowledge, or out of wishful thinking or self-interest or group pressures, they are inadequately founded. Hence our persuasions must be so challenging, so deep and real, as to call forth the whole of life into those channels of release that make for the best in personality development and expression and in social attitudes and sympathies.

As we face the vast fields of doubt and uncertainty apparent today, we realize that the times call for a new order of soul persuasion. Our entire Christian attitude is subject to critical questioning. Men are asking, Wherein is Christian authorization to life? Why Christianity's seeming weakness after twenty centuries of propagation, that within four decades its philosophy of life has been so widely forsaken and denied among the nations? To what ends shall men live today? Has Christianity a vital message for such a time? What new or revamped techniques shall be relied upon to establish its validity and persuade the hearts of men into Christian channels in such an hour of crisis?

GREAT PERSUASIONS AND LIFE

Paul affirms, "I am persuaded." We know what persuasion did for him. His education had steeped his mind and soul with both the traditions and the prejudices of his people. Education is quite largely doing that same thing today. But Paul met Christ. This meeting taught him that a man may be entirely conscientious in his persuasions, yet totally wrong. Even religionists may be so. They may see Christ only in profile. But Paul met him face to face. No man can look squarely into Christ's eyes and remain the same.

Ralph Wakefield

Paul was persuaded into new mental attitudes. He affirms that what "he once loved, now he hates, and what he once hated, now he loves." He was persuaded into new spheres of life disposal. From persecutor he became propagandist. He was persuaded to self-giving of the totality of his being, declaring: "I count all things but loss for the excellencies of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." He was persuaded to a new devotion, crying: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Great persuasions have changed the destinies of men and peoples. George Washington's mother persuaded him to give up his purpose to join the British navy; the results are known by all. Lincoln witnessed the

ale of human flesh in the slave market in New Orleans, nd afterward, while listening to the denunciation of ne enslavement of men by the Reverend Peter Ackers, vas persuaded that if the opportunity ever came he would "hit the traffic and hit it hard." Gipsy Smith, neeling by the hawthorn hedge with a Bible which e could not read open before him, was persuaded hrough his prayer that God could fill his soul with he spirit of the Book whose words he could not decipher. E. Stanley Jones, disheartened, discouraged and ll, found divine persuasions in an ashram among the Himalaya mountains from which he came forth the reless herald of a Christian order to every nation nd every tribe under the sun.

THE PERSUASIONS OF PAUL

Now, what were the basic persuasions of Paul? What ruths made for the release of those dynamic forces within him which changed the whole course of his life nd through him channeled the thoughts and actions f men through the centuries? He saw the outspilled ove of God manifested in Jesus Christ—a love so allembracing, so infinite and so potent that it called forth he dedication of his total life.

Hear his words! "I am persuaded"—first, regarding y personal life, my essential self, that nothing in the ccident of death, awful and woeful as it may be, nor a the circumstance of life, irrespective of its hardship r stress, can "separate from the love of God which is n Christ Jesus, our Lord." And, second, that all exernals, angels, principalities and powers, great and eemingly potent and often seemingly triumphant, are ot adequate to sever from the divine love of God in Christ. And, third, that the discoveries of the mind in its outreach into the extremities of existence in the heights, or its downreach into the vast universe beneath, or into all the creatural realms that environ the soul, are not sufficiently strong to sever the bonds of love that tie the soul into God.

THE PATH TO POISE

What a conviction! Nothing, yea verily nothing, can have power over the soul that finds persuasion, total and adequate and all-compelling persuasion, of that love of God whose height and length, breadth and depth, pass all knowledge. It is to such persuasion that the times call the followers of Christ today. Out of it will be derived such poise and calm as only God gives to the trusting spirit. Out of it will come that unification of personal life, Christ-centered and love-impelled, that makes for peace within and gives power to effective efforts for peace without.

It is out of such persuasion that, amidst the discordant condition of the world of today, men may with radiant hope look toward the breaking dawn of that day wherein new human orders and relationships, based upon love and motivated by love, shall arise to fulfill the angelic prophecy of "peace on earth and good will among men."

ALL that is vital in Christianity has remained untouched by the most complete revolutions in religion. Churches are doing for us now what they were doing during our childhood, namely, stimulating us to right conduct, and developing our ideals and our inspirations. ROBERT A. MILLIKAN.

A Pastoral Prayer

By HENRY R. ROSE

OUR Heavenly Father, the Christian world comes to Thee in anxious prayer. Millions throughout he length and breadth of the earth are lifting up their etitions to Thee because thy well-beloved Son taught hem to pray in times of crisis and set them an exmple by the blue waters of Galilee and amid the dark adows of Gethsemane. Men have as dire need of ivine help in these dread hours as they did then.

Jesus lived when the affairs of mankind were in haos and there seemed no way to change them for the etter. We thank Thee that Thou didst not allow im to despair. Jesus turned his eyes toward Thee, his od and humanity's God, and he gained from Thee ictorious courage and unquenchable cheer.

We thank Thee that our Leader was sure that the od who knew how to make the sun triumph over he snow and ice of winter and bring the new life of pring to every waiting bud and blossom, would find way to triumph over the forces of evil let loose by wicked men, and bring humanity the freedom and peace was born into this world to enjoy. We thank Thee, O Father, for our Master's words of eternal assurance: Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

Help us to believe, in these dark times, that the Holy One who died on a cross and rose again is still in the midst of men, working the will of God and slowly but surely making God's ways triumphant. We are never alone as we fight valiantly the good fight of Christian faith or struggle against unequal odds to establish a new world of justice and love.

We are assured that Christ will not desert his faithful friends now, in their darkest and hardest hour. Help all loyal men and women, wherever they may be serving him amid the tempest and anguish of war, to hear his strong voice: "Take heart. It is I. Have no fear."

O Master, calm the raging waters of hate, war and bloodshed as Thou didst calm the Sea of Galilee. Bring the furious nations eye to eye in a Christlike understanding of one another, that they may see that only a Christian peace will solve their problems and secure for them prosperity and happiness.

Search Thou our hearts and help us to cast out prejudice, race hatred, revengefulness and ill will that our Christian example may be known and felt throughout the troubled world. Amen.

Why Not Open the Doors?

By Hillyer H. Straton

In a discussion group on worship at the Michigan Ministers' Conference at Ann Arbor the question was raised of an adequate close for a worship service. It was pointed out that a worship program of from thirty to forty-five minutes usually preceded a sermon, while the closing of a service after the message was often abrupt. At this point mention was made of the method we had been using at the First Baptist Church of Detroit of "opening the doors of the church" at the close of each service. Immediately considerable interest was aroused and many questions were raised as to the method adopted as well as to the wisdom of extending a general invitation at each service.

● *Extreme Emotionalism Not Necessary*

"Opening the doors of the church" is a common procedure in most evangelical churches in the south. It is likewise often employed by evangelists and tabernacle groups in other sections of the country. The immediate picture is raised of a Billy Sunday campaign, the sawdust trail and the mourners' bench. These associations present a certain antique glamor plus wistful memories of youthful enthusiasm. Unfortunately the association may not always be the most pleasant, for memories crowd in of religious tension, extreme emotionalism and unwise pressure, usually connected with some evangelist more interested in numbers and in collections than in a genuine advance of the cause of Christ.

Just because there are pitfalls to be avoided in any procedure is not a valid reason to rule it out, nor is it sufficient to say that the method has been misused. What worship methods have not been misused? There are many and obvious advantages connected with giving persons an opportunity to declare themselves for Christ and his church at every worship service.

● *A Simple Statement Found Effective*

In theory and often in practice the Christian church has been vigorously evangelistic, yet there are many people who attend Protestant churches week after week and yet have never discovered the methods those churches employ of gaining new members. Often the natural timidity of persons about exposing their inner religious feelings makes them hesitant about inquiring how a given church receives new members. In the churches that "open the doors" every congregational worshiper at least knows the first step necessary to become a church member.

Although a public invitation to accept Christ or unite with the church by letter may be accompanied by an impassioned plea along with the singing of an emotional type of gospel or invitational hymn, it is also possible to invite a person into the Christian fellowship in a gracious and dignified manner. The statement I use is brief and has become as much a part of the routine of worship as the doxology.

After announcing a closing hymn

Hillyer H. Straton

that is often one of the great stately hymns of the church chosen because it fits the message just delivered, I say: "The doors of the church are open to any who are ready to unite with us by letter, confession of faith or after baptism." There is no high pressure and there is no further amplification except at an occasional evening service which has been particularly evangelistic in character. At service after service this identical phraseology is used. The simplicity of the statement is such that there is no embarrassment whatever on the part of the minister or the congregation if no one happens to respond. In practice, however, there is scarcely a Sunday at which one or more persons do not quietly come down the aisle thereby expressing their intention of uniting with the church.

A deacon is in readiness to greet any who come. He arranges for a meeting with the membership committee. This committee does a very thorough piece of work in instructing prospective new members concerning their relationship to Christ and the local church. Necessary information is secured. The activities of the church are set forth, the value of regular attendance at the worship services is emphasized. The financial needs of the local church and its larger missionary obligations are explained. The candidate is given an opportunity to fill out a pledge card. Candidates are then assigned to certain deacons and deaconesses as their spiritual responsibility.

Many evangelically minded ministers hesitate to give a public invitation because they fear a lack of response. This difficulty is overcome by the simplicity of the presentation plus the prior contact with prospective members in which they are asked to come forward at the church service when the invitation is given. Very few are unwilling to do this when some of the reasons considered below are explained.

● *Ample Preparation Brings Response*

In the average active church there are usually a sufficient number of additions during the year to make it possible for someone to come at least every other Sunday. This tends to make winning additions for Christ and the church a perennial rather than an occasional or seasonal matter. There is no question of ethics involved in having a candidate for membership prepared to make such a public step if he is a genuine candidate.

Consider the worship advantages of a service concluded by a public invitation, especially when there has been a response. The subject matter of the sermon need not be particularly evangelistic. It may be a doctrinal sermon. It may be a sermon on peace or on any of the Christian virtues. It might even be a polemic against alcohol or other social evils. At the conclusion of the service the invitation is given, and one or more come forward. The very fact of the response is visible proof of their endorsement of the message. How many times have worshipers listened to an impassioned evangelical, missionary or social plea and wondered what they could do about it! When someone comes forward something is being done—new persons are being enlisted who want to identify themselves with the church and the minister standing for such a message. Furthermore, the church members, as they watch the

individual walk down the aisle, come forward in spirit with him, thereby expressing their agreement with the message that has been delivered.

● *Concrete Evidence of a Growing Church*

Consider the psychological advantages: The individual who is uniting with the church by letter publicly reaffirms his loyalty to Christ and the church. Such a public affirmation strengthens his determination to be a good Christian and church member. If the person is a candidate for baptism the public witness is also of great value to the individual concerned; especially is this so if the particular church with which he is uniting makes a habit of performing the ordinance of baptism at some period other than that of general worship. There is a distinctly favorable psychological effect upon a church congregation, for Sunday after Sunday it has visible evidence that the church is growing.

This is particularly important in those churches that ordinarily receive persons into membership at a mid-week meeting with small attendance, or in those churches where members are received after consultation with the officials of the church. The church might be experiencing a vigorous growth and the average Sunday morning worshiper never be aware of it. One church of my acquaintance received 125 new members during the year but the ministry was considered as not too successful, for most of the membership knew nothing of the additions. Not only does this factor of growth make its impact upon the congregation, but there is a vicarious reaffirmation of the faith of each worshiper as individuals walk forward to unite with the church.

The evangelistic advantages are obvious: Every member of the church is constantly reminded that Christ's Kingdom is a going and a growing concern. Mass enthusiasm may have its drawbacks but it also has its advantages, and it is a healthy thing for the corporate body that is the church to recognize its own growth. It is wise to capitalize upon the normal human desire to unite with the organization that is growing.

● *New Testament Precedents*

"Opening the doors of the church" also means a return to the New Testament method. The public appeal cannot be successfully continued today unless there is response at a reasonable number of services. The response will not come unless there has been adequate preparation by the personal work of the pastor or wise laymen with prospective members. In the Book of Acts Philip was called "the evangelist." He may have been a mass evangelist, but with the Ethiopian eunuch he certainly was an effective personal evangelist.

We remember the early chapters of Acts for their record of mass movements into the early church. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter responded, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins." Three thousand were added to the church on that day. The public appeal had its value when Peter "opened the doors" in that glorious day of the early church. In these incidents we have New Testament precedent for the two most effective methods of winning men to Christ.

Announcement

Because of his extensive and intensive study in the field of preaching, the editors of The Christian Century Pulpit have requested Dr. Harold W. Ruopp, minister of the Central Church of Chicago, to write an extended article on "Life Situation Preaching." In the May issue he will present his fundamental conceptions of this approach to preaching. In the June issue, he will present a final summary of the study which he made in cooperation with his students, while teaching in the Boston University School of Theology and Andover-Newton Theological School.

Dr. Ruopp, though still a young man, has become widely known for his understanding of and insight into the preaching task of the minister, and for his studies of the life situations which people face. He has spoken to theological schools and ministers' conferences throughout the country. Said one leader: "I do not remember ever seeing a preacher make a deeper impression than did Dr. Ruopp at our State Pastors' Conference."

It is Dr. Ruopp's conviction that while the life situation approach to preaching is not the only approach, it is the one "which has the greatest opportunity of making the pulpit a throne of power" in a confused and troubled age.

The editors believe that his presentation of the opportunities for genuine success in the ministry through what he calls "life situation" preaching will stimulate interest among preachers everywhere.

THE EDITORS.

The Editors of The Christian Century Pulpit Want Your Help

Consider the following Questions and send us your answers immediately.

Whom do you consider the most EFFECTIVE preachers in America today?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Do you prefer to read sermons by

☐ "Outstanding" preachers?
☐ Preachers less well known?
☐ Both?

Do you prefer

☐ Sermons on the contemporary world situation?
☐ Biblical sermons (textual and expository)?
☐ Doctrinal sermons?
☐ Life situation sermons?
☐ Evangelistic sermons?

[*Check in order of preference*]

What features of the Christian Century Pulpit do you enjoy most? (Indicate order of preference.)

☐ Sermons?
☐ Preacher Problem articles?
☐ Editorials?
☐ Titles and Texts?

Additional comments on the Christian Century Pulpit.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My name

_____

Name of Church

_____

Address

_____

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. ALBERT G. BUTZER *has been* minister of the Westminster Church, Buffalo, N. Y., since 1932. An earlier pastorate was at West Side Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood, N. J. He received his A.B. at Northwestern College, Naperville, Ill., and was a student for two years at the Evangelical Seminary at Naperville. He was awarded his B.D. degree *(magna cum laude)* by Union Theological Seminary. He delivered the Schaefer lectures at Yale in 1938. The sermon published in this issue was preached at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club.

*President of Seabury-Western Theo*logical Seminary, Evanston, Ill., from 1927 to 1938, Dr. FREDERICK C. GRANT has for the past three years been professor of New Testament at Union Seminary. In his earlier career he was rector of Trinity Church, Chicago, for four years and held teaching posts at Kenyon College and Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Conn.

Dr. STEPHEN J. ENGLAND *received his* A.B. at Phillips University, Enid, Okla., his Th.M. at Princeton Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. at Yale. He has headed the department of church history at Phillips University Bible College since 1933. His address published in this issue was one of a series on "Great Christian Convictions" given at this school.

Early pastorates of Rev. KING D. BEACH were in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Chicago and Baltimore. Then followed his service at First Methodist, Tacoma, Wash., and at Trinity Methodist, Kansas City, where he now ministers. Mr. Beach was educated at Albion College, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia and Union Seminary.

Rev. ALFRED W. PRICE *has been rector* of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, N. Y., for the past ten years. Graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1926, he received his B.D. from the Episcopal Theological School three years later. He was president of the Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation in 1939.

Since 1937 Rev. FRED E. LUCHS *has* ministered at the Presbyterian Church in Athens, Ohio, seat of Ohio University. For a number of years he was pastor of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Knox, Pa. His education was received at Franklin and Marshall College, Eastern Theological Seminary, Hartford Seminary, the University of Chicago and Chicago Theological Saminary. He has served as exchange preacher in British churches, also in Paris and Berlin.

Rev. PERRY E. GRESHAM *is minister of* the University Church and professor of philosophy at Texas Christian University, Ft. Worth, Texas. He is on sabbatical leave for this academic session, studying at Columbia University, where he will complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree this June. He was awarded A.B. and B.D. degrees by T. C. U., and subsequently pursued philosophical studies at the University of Chicago.

Rev. RALPH WAKEFIELD *received his* education at Baker University, Drew Seminary and Columbia University. For several years he was pastor of the Englewood Methodist Church, Chicago, and is now minister at First Methodist Church of Irving Park, Chicago. He was president of the Chicago church federation 1939-40.

Rev. HENRY R. ROSE *is pastor emeritus* of the Universalist Church, Newark, N. J.

Rev. HILLYER H. STRATON *is minister* of the First Baptist Church, Detroit, Mich.

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

WILLIAM E. BROOKS, First Presbyterian, Morgantown, W. Va. "Again, the Shadow of the Cross!" Matt. 10:38—"He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me."

WARREN GRAFTON, Walnut Hills Christian, Cincinnati, O. "Invitation to Live." John 10:10—"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

E. MYERS HARRISON, Woodlawn Baptist, Chicago. "Faith's Invincible Surmise." Hebrews 11.

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of sermon

Text used (write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

LAWRENCE M. HORTON, Presbyterian, Noroton, Conn. "What Does Jesus Do to *Us?*" Acts 4:13—"They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

C. LLOYD DAUGHERTY, Smithfield St. Methodist, Pittsburgh. "Light for a Darkened World." Luke 1:78, 79—"The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

JOHN K. LASLEY, Lutheran, Goldsboro, N. C. "The Church's Part in National Defense." Eph. 6:11, 12—"Put on the whole armor of God . . . for we wrestle not against flesh and blood."

GEORGE G. COX, First Presbyterian, Salmon City, Ida. "Humanity's Axis Power." John 8:12—"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

T. O. M. WILLS, First Presbyterian, Portland, Ind. "God Is Passing By." Job 9:10—"Lo, he goeth by me and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE MONTH of March 1941 will go down in our annals as marking a new era in America's political, economic, social and international life. In that month, the Congress transferred to the executive virtually absolute power over our foreign and domestic affairs. While it kept for itself the right to "declare" war, it emptied this prerogative of all content and significance, retaining only the verbal privilege of saying that what we are now doing or shall be doing *is* war. The President has already begun to exercise his new power in the manner that befits the dictatorial pattern with which the world of our time is all too familiar. He moves rapidly in fulfilling his pledges to aid Britain, speaking truculently about the "enemy" and "victory" and half-cryptically but firmly of the changes which our people must be prepared to undergo in support of his policy to put the nation into the very thick of the conflicts now raging all over the world. The President is now at war, with the consent of Congress, but, I continue to believe, without the willing consent of the people. No attribution of "unanimity" such as that with which Mr. Roosevelt clothed his interpretation of the action of Congress can make unanimity a fact. He is leading a divided people into war. The large section of public opinion which opposed the lease-lend bill should now make common cause with those of its supporters who hold that this is not America's war, and keep the President reminded of his pledges to the American people, whatever be the pledges he has made to Great Britain.

The President Enters the War

The Book of the Month

THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN, *(Gifford Lectures). By Reinhold Niebuhr. Two volumes: Volume I, Human Nature. Scribner's Sons, $2.75.*

MANY among us have treated theology with contempt. We have even preached against it! We have told people that it had nothing to do with Christianity, which we said is a way of life, a spirit, a practice of the Sermon on the Mount, and other such half-truths. The result is that we have reduced Christianity to a shallow pietism or moralism, without soil or root. I wish I could shout from the housetops that theology is coming back! The world situation is driving us to *think* about our Christianity. In my opinion the chaos of the present hour is ultimately due to the failure of the Christian church to *understand* its own gospel. Many of us have been looking forward with keen expectation to the publication of Dr. Niebuhr's Gifford lectures. Of the five American scholars invited to participate in this most famous lectureship, he is the first American theologian. Here in this volume are those lectures dealing with the nature of man. The second volume will deal with man's destiny. The book has just come into my hands, and I am having to stop reading at page 226 to write this. I haven't space to "review" it, but I tell you it is great reading! The deepest impression which I have derived from the first two-thirds of the book is that of Niebuhr's devastating exposure of the pretensions of modern culture to understand human nature. He shows us how far we have wandered from the Christian view of man, how immeasurably more profound the Christian view is, and how impossible is the Christian view except on the basis of divine revelation. An incidental, but persistent, effect upon the reader is the starlike glow which shines from the gems of Scripture with which his pages are studded.

A Thought for the Month

SENSITIVE persons who reflect upon their relations with other people are likely to be haunted more by their sins of omission than by their sins of commission. After all, the area in which we do nothing is vastly larger than the area in which we do something. Our positive deeds and misdeeds are specific and numerable, while the deeds we have left undone—who can count them? Not only are these undone deeds more numerous, but they carry a poignancy all their own. When they arise in retrospect to reproach us they evoke a peculiar sense of unworthiness and guilt. We can find no excuse for not having done them. For many of our sins of commission we can find plausible or semi-plausible excuses—our passion betrayed us, or our words were ill chosen, or we did not understand, or the fellow really deserved what we gave him. Thinking it over, if our heart condemn us, we can make a clean breast of it and apologize and by our subsequent behavior entirely heal the wound and reinstate the broken friendship. But if our sin was one of neglect, of omission, of unawareness, we are left without excuse. All we can say to our friend is that we did not think of the obvious opportunity to do him a kindness, to write him a comforting note in his sorrow, to come to his back in his hard fight against misfortune. The wound which our neglect has made is not like the wound caused by some positive misdeed. It is more difficult to cure. Our apology only betrays to our friend the stark truth that he held so minor a place in our heart that we *could* forget him, and our penitence cannot easily wash that truth away. I imagine that when the books are unrolled and our life story is spread out before us, our shame for the opportunities we allowed to go by without doing anything at all will be far deeper than the shame arising from our misdeeds. Hear again the divine judgment of men in that unforgettable verdict: "Inasmuch as ye did it *not*. . . ."

Our Sins of Omission

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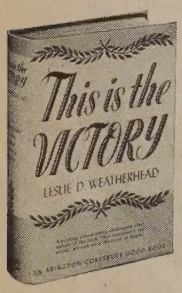

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